

01986

1996/12/05

UNCLASSIFIED

SUBJ: HONG KONG SAREX 96 UPDATE

SUMMARY: The Hong Kong Civil Aviation Department (CAD) has conducted an annual SAREX for the past twenty years. The exercise involves joint U.S. and multinational participation to practice and observe peacetime Search and Rescue (SAR) operations in the Hong Kong region. The U.S. has participated in the exercise at various levels since 1976. PACAF is our Executive Agent. Hong Kong SAREX 96 took place from 2-5 December 96. The future of the exercise beyond the 1 JUL 97 reversion is unknown.

KEY POINTS:

- *This exercise is with Hong Kong not the People's Republic of China (PRC)
- *PACOM has no exercises with the PRC
- *Hong Kong SAREX could be a catalyst for starting a U.S./China exercise program
- *PACOM should negotiate continuance of the exercise with the PRC

DISCUSSION:

- * Hong Kong SAREX 96 objectives:
 - ** Improve multilateral SAR coordination in WESTPAC
 - ** Exchange peacetime SAR procedures/techniques with multinational SAR forces
 - ** Provide presence during Hong Kong reversion to PRC control
- * U.S Force participation:
 - **PACAF - 1 HC-130 and an element from the Pacific Rescue Coordination Center (RCC)
 - **PACFLT - 1 P-3 aircraft and an element from the Joint RCC
 - **USCG - USCG Cutter the Morgenthau and 1 HH-65
 - **Total U.S. force participation is approximately 215 personnel
 - **RADM Collins, CDR, 14th Coast Guard District, HI was the senior U.S. representative
- * Multinational participation:
 - **Hong Kong CAD and various other Hong Kong Agencies
 - **Observers included 36 from the PRC, 7 from Vietnam, 2 from Brunei, 2 from Thailand and 2 from Macau
- * The exercise involves a variety of SAR operations that include:
 - **A short range water rescue demonstration
 - **Long range search exercise involving the simulated ditching of an aircraft up to 100 miles off shore
 - **Demonstration of the Coast Guard computer aided search planning program
 - **Symposium on international SAR topics
- * The PRC has observed or participated in several past Hong Kong SAREX exercises

BOTTOM LINE: Continuing Hong Kong SAREX provides the potential for possible future exercises with the PRC. PACOM should negotiate the continuance of the exercise after the reversion of Hong Kong to the PRC on 1 July 97.